

NESQLUG NEWS
The Journal of Record of
New England Sinclair QL User Group
Vol III, No 2

"A Beacon to Guide the Wandering Sojourner Home from the Abyss of Confusion"

EDITOR'S NOTES

There is a lot of good news in this issue.

A members-only special deal is being offered by Digital Precision of the UK and EMSOFT of Boston.

We have some very nice letters to the editor.

There are several articles that the editor thinks are of genuine interest to QLers (he didn't write them, but see what happens when you forget that you don't know anything and write anyway.)

QL World is alive and well with another new address.

There are lots of new goodies for the QL. The one we like is the serial interface that lets you use an off-the-shelf MS-DOS mouse. It is said (in Quanta) to have some teething problems, but if you are a cat and like mice, it may be just the thing for you Xmas stocking.

There is some bad news. Ernie Wider, our Director pro tem, has been spending some time in the hospital.

I think that it is just to get a bit of a rest now that he is retired and has to catch up on 25 years of chores that never got done. Others say that it is a mite serious, so you may want to send a card. He is home now.

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Editor
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The NESQLUG NEWS is the Journal of the New England Sinclair QL User Group. It is published bi-monthly.

Annual membership is \$10.00 (students \$5.00) in North America. The rest of the world - \$15.00 air mail.

We meet monthly on the first Saturday of odd-numbered months and the first Sunday of even numbered months. If that's a holiday weekend, we meet the following weekend.

NEXT MEETINGS

NESQLUG meets from 11:00 pm to 4:00pm, Saturday, September 12, at the home of Sherr & Fran Waterman, 40 Eileen St., Yarmouthport MA. See directions elsewhere.

In October there will meet for the special interest group on Sunday, October 4. Topic and location have not been set. Call Peter Hale or Ernie Wider for an update.

Our exchange policy is simple: we send-you-ours-if-you-send-us-yours (WSYOIYSUY) and you have something to say about the QL.

NEW ADDRESS Please forward exchange issues to Mike Jonas, 15 Fenno St. #1, Cambridge MA 02138.

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NEW ENGLAND
SINCLAIR QL
USERS GROUP
2 P.O. Box 8763
Boston, MA 02114

FIRST CLASS MAIL

To:

September/October 1992
NESQLUG Newsletter

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THE SEPTEMBER MEETING AGENDA by Will Horton

The September meeting will be hosted at the home of Sherm Waterman in Yarmouthport, MA. Directions follow.

The meeting will begin sharply at 11:00 A.M. (I will try to be on time) on Saturday, September 12. This is of great importance since we will be electing officers that will lead us through the next year of our QL activities. Arrive on time or you may be elected to something.

Also, ideas for what should be presented at our upcoming meetings will need to be discussed.

After lunch three presentations have been scheduled.

The first item to be demonstrated will be QTOP, "The definitive user front end." Also to be presented will be Sherm Waterman's Recipe Index for the QL, and finally a discussion on Appreciation of Ram Disking.

This promises to be an exciting meeting. Please plan to attend. Officers will be elected and the course of our next years meetings will be set.

NESQLUG Meeting Directions
September 12, 1992
at Sherm Waterman's
in Yarmouthport MA.

Agenda:

Come anytime from 9 AM onward for setup

11:00-11:30 Meet with friends-coffee and...

11:30-Noon Business meeting - election of officers

Noon-1:00 Lunch (Bring and share)
1:00-4:00 (or later) Software demos and swaps

DIRECTIONS TO SHERM'S HOUSE

YOUR DESTINATION:

40 Eileen St., Yarmouthport, MA
Our TELEPHONE is: (508) 362-5322

From Boston and points North, get on either Route 128 South or the Southeast Expressway going South.

Stay on either road until they both meet and become Route 3 South (to Cape Cod). Stay on Route 3 until you reach the Sagamore rotary. You can't miss it, it's the only rotary you'll be coming to.

At this point, make a half swing around the rotary and go over the Sagamore Bridge. This is Route 6 going East, better known as the Mid-Cape Highway. Continue reading at sixth paragraph.

From west (Providence, etc.) take Interstate 195 to Route 28 to the Bourne rotary. Go 3/4 around rotary and pick up route 6. Be careful that you don't go over the Bourne bridge to the Cape. You want to go over the Sagamore bridge. Route 6 parallels the Cape Cod Canal on the west side. You will come to the Sagamore rotary. Make a 1/4 turn, stay on Route 6 and go over the Sagamore bridge.

Hope you enjoyed the view of the canal from the bridge! Now you're on the Cape!

Stay on Route 6 till exit 8 (Dennis/Union Street). DO NOT TAKE EXIT 7 THAT SAYS YARMOUTHPORT AND WILLOW STREET. IT'S A NO-NO.

At exit 8 (Union Street) go down the ramp on your right and STAY TO THE LEFT because you'll be making a left turn at the bottom. Careful of traffic here, please.

(Cont. Next page)

After you make the left turn at the bottom of the ramp (Union Street), continue straight to the end. It dead ends at Route 6A (blinking light/gas station). Take a RIGHT turn on Route 6A and continue for about 1.2 miles.

You will see first a small shopping strip on your LEFT (Fiddler's Green) then just beyond, on your LEFT a sign saying KINGS WAY Condominiums and Golf Course. STAY ALERT NOW because at about 100 yards you will take a RIGHT turn onto HALYARD - then an immediate LEFT turn onto GANNET. Continue to the end of GANNET (about 100 yards) and it dead-ends onto EILEEN STREET, our street.

Look diagonally across to your right and THAT'S OUR HOUSE, a grey ranch, white trim, pink door. Swing right on Eileen and take an immediate left into our driveway (40 Eileen Street). We'll be waiting with coffee and... after your long ordeal. Looking forward!!

Sherr Waterman

LETTERS

ZX-81 Emulator

We have received a request from one of our NESQLUG members,

Mr. L. Moll
Van Almondestr 146
2614 GB Delft
HOLLAND

I am a collector of ZX81 programs, books and hardware.

I used the ZX-81 emulator (SEE NESQLUG NEWS July/August 1992) on my Gold Card with E.D. drives and it works perfectly.

L. Moll

I have more than 400 programs on disk.

If a member of NESQLUG is interested, he/she can write me at the above address.

Perhaps we can exchange programs, etc.

From Hugh Howie

Just got my version 3 of text87plus4 and it is really worth it.

Aside from being faster there are some nifty new features. For example, there is a dedicated CTRL key that lets you change the case of a letter under the cursor. Lots of other CTRL keys that do other nice things.

From Andre Baune

Chateauguay, P.Q. 92/08/14

Dear friends,

Many thanks for sharing with me and the whole Sinclair Timex family you big news for the ZX81/Timex 1000 from Holland.

I sent a copy of this info to all the other Sinclair Timex clubs. I hope they will do the same for you in the future.

Even though I primarily devote ZX-91 to the ZX81/Timex 1000, I also give the names and addresses of other Sinclair Timex clubs and dealers. Sharing and helping each other is the key to our survival.

May the ZX to QL prosper!

QL WORLD UPDATE

QL World has announced in the August issue of Quanta that it has new editorial and subscription offices.

QL WORLD

% Arcwind Publications

The Blue Barn

Tew Lane, Wootton

Woodstock, Oxon OX7 1HA

UNITED KINGDOM

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MARKET TESTING

Is the QL alive or dead in North America? More properly, does the great interest in the Gold Card in North America indicate that there is also a major market for software?

Recently, Digital Precision and EMSOFT decided to find out.

As a special offer to NESQLUG members, to determine if there is a market here, Digital Precision and EMSOFT will offer a flat 20% discount on any DP title(s) (not including DR-DOS 6.0) purchased by a NESQLUG member (in North America) before October 31, 1992.

Here's how it works:

Elsewhere in this issue NESQLUG members will get a current DP six page ad and terms and conditions.

Choose a title or titles.

Calculate the amount due as follows: Multiply the Pound Sterling amount by 2 (two) to get the US dollar cost. (The Pound is presently \$2.00+ and getting more expensive daily.) Then take 80% of that number.

Send a check payable to EMSOFT at P.O. Box 8763, Boston, MA 02114-0037 for that amount. It will be placed in escrow until your order arrives.

All titles will be ordered as a bulk order (there is no shipping charge) on November 1, 1992. You will receive them well before Christmas.

OK, you say, why not just order the titles direct. DP gives a 25% discount for 5 or more titles so what is the big deal?

True, but then add 10% shipping, handling and documentation to North America and possibly customs duty.

So what is to keep me from getting together with non-NESQLUG friends to order? Nothing, if the order is in your name and you're a NESQLUG member. Think of it though. The \$10.00 cost to belong to NESQLUG is

free if you realize the discount on just one title!

Questions? Call Peter Hale at (1-617) 889-0830.

POWER SUPPLIES???

(Don't trust what you've got!)
by Sherm Waterman

My system had consisted of a daily QL with MINERVA (1.92) ROM; a backup QL with MGUS ROM/Tom Bent modified; two original QL power supplies, one for daily use and one for backup; GOLD CARD; two 3 1/2" double ED drives and two 5 1/4" QDDS drives.

For several years I ran my system with the original QL power supply that came with my initial purchase. All of a sudden, one day, it melted.

Having purchased, at the CATSFest three years ago, two other QL power supplies for \$4.00 each to keep in reserve, I plugged one of them in and it powered my system for two years.

The one thing that had always bothered me, though, was screen flutter in the bottom half of the screen. I had tried to shield everything, but the flutter persisted. I learned to live with it.

All of a sudden a computer problem reared its ugly head! I blew the 8301 chip on my everyday QL. It was suggested that perhaps the power supply contributed to a surge and I should try my backup computer with my remaining backup power supply.

My backup computer had a hard wired 512K additional memory built in and I was afraid to use it with GOLD CARD, not knowing how this additional memory would react with GOLD CARD. [Won't with version 1 Gold Card. Will with ver 2 (red). Ed]

No way would I put my GOLD CARD at risk! So I borrowed a QL from Peter Hale to keep me up and running.

(Cont on page 5)

POWER SUPPLIES (cont from p. 4)

I dragged out my \$4.00 backup QL power supply, plugged in the GOLD CARD and expected everything to continue as normal.

One of the first things I tried to do was to get a document printout. Everything ran, all printer lights lit, things hummed but NOTHING PRINTED! What the H--- was this?

I powered down, plugged in my first power supply and, voila, my document was printed with no problems. It seems that the second power supply was not putting out enough to power all the peripherals.

This leads me to believe that either my backup power supply was faulty in the first place or had deteriorated over time. CHECK YOURS!

I sent both of my computers off to Dan Elliott at Computer Classics, Route 1, Box 117; Cabool, MO 65689 for repair and modification for the Adam/Coleco power supply.

As of this writing, my two computers and new power supply are two days old. The computers were returned cleaned up and without a speck of dust showing. Both computers have been tested with GOLD CARD and are running perfectly. The Adam/Coleco power supply has eliminated my screen flutter and, with fingers crossed, I say "Thanks, Peter" and "Thanks Dan Elliott".

FOR SALE

Mike Mitchell has some surplus QL equipment, including a spare Vision Monitor and some extra QL's. Prices negotiable (especially since shipping may be a factor.) Call (617) 599-3767.

A SHORT LECTURE WITH SOME EXPERIMENTS FOR YOU TO TRY

(or ONE MAN'S JOURNEY)

by Hugh Howie

The first thing I want to make clear is that this little bit of a lecture is not for the guru, but rather for the many who have never really tried a lot of the TK2 tricks available. I do not know them all myself. So let's get on with the job and try a few.

W A R N I N G

The following experiments may entail the changing of various components, such as Cumana and TK2 and Trump Card, but is not essential, just so that you understand what is going on. So I must reissue the warning that every time a component change is made, the QL system should be shut down entirely, and restarted from scratch.

Don't worry if you do not have all the add-ons I mention, just experiment with what you do have and I am sure you will find something of interest somewhere. Good Luck.

***** IN ALL EXPERIMENTS USE
COPY PROGRAMS AND NOT THE
ORIGINALS

To conserve space/time I am not going to use <ENTER> after each command. I am going to presume you know to do this automatically.

But before we start, perhaps I should mention a few terms which are used in this talk.

DEFAULT This is where the QL looks for what it is looking for if you don't specify a device! Oh! yes, I know that the word default is not necessarily a nice word in every day life, but in computer language the meaning is slightly changed. It is like retiring for the evening, you sort of stagger along the corridor for so many paces, turn right, and fall into bed. You DEFAULTED!.

(Cont on page 7)

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- * Our non-game programs are very comprehensively documented with A4 manuals averaging about seventy pages in length (the largest is 325+). They are 4-hole punched for easy binding and storage.
- * UK purchasers - the quoted figures are all-inclusive. For the rest of Europe, add 5% (rest of the world, 10%) to the quoted figures to arrive at the VAT-free total (exports are zero-rated for UK VAT), inclusive of all freight and documentation charges.
- * Acceptable forms of payment are sterling cheque drawn on a UK branch of a bank or building society, sterling postal order, Eurocheque made out in sterling, international money order in sterling, VISA/ACCESS/EUROCARD/MASTERCARD (specify expiry date), foreign currency cheque (add 10% conversion charge), cash, direct funds transfer (notify us in writing, and ensure that all charges are paid your end, or add 5%) to A/C 50327808 DIGITAL PRECISION LTD at Barclays Bank PLC (Branch code 20-79-44), South Chingford Branch, 260-262 Chingford Mount Rd, London E4 8JN.
- * To upgrade from one version of a program to a superior program, send us the cartridge/disk. Except in the case of upgrades between program versions both with the same name, send the manual too. The cost of an upgrade is £10 plus the difference in current advertised price between the two programs. So the upgrade from DIGITAL C to SPECIAL EDITION DIGITAL C costs £30, and you would need to return the old manual as the program names are different. PERFECTION is not an upgrade to EDITOR, but SE EDITOR owners are allowed to claim a £5 reduction when ordering PERFECTION.
- * Our programs are all user-transferable between cartridge and disk, are all free from ALL copy protection, and all work with all drives, toolkits, RAM add-ons and disk interfaces (except for early MCS interfaces, to which the emulators and media managers object). Users of the Microperipherals interface are recommended to buy the QFLP ROM upgrade from Care. ST/QL Emulator owners will benefit from a c2.7x speed increase on our software.
- * All trademarks used or referred to in this ad are acknowledged.
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TK2 PRIMER (cont from p. 5)

That is what the QL does, it knows where to go to find something because IT WAS TOLD BEFOREHAND. So now you know!

DEVICE This can be almost anything, flp, mdv, ch (channel), scr (screen) con (screen again), ser (does not always require a number, but it sometimes does)

COMMA The Comma may be used to save a keystroke and here is an example: "wcopy flp1_ to flp2_" may be expressed as "wcopy flp1_ , flp2_". Please note the comma between flp1_ and flp2_. There are many cases where this abbreviation may be used instead of " to ".

We will start with some directory control functions which show where things can be found, and how to find what they are and how to change them.

BARE BONES 128K QL With the 'bare bones' QL we find on power-up that mdv1 spins for a few seconds. After all, we only have microdrives to work with.

We will install TK2 in the ROM port at the back (You powered down to do this, didn't you?) and we know that there are lot of extra commands now available that were not there before. So type in **EXTRAS** and see what we get: about 120 commands on screen. One of those will be **DLIST** so we will type in **DLIST** and we will see on screen the directory defaults, and they are indeed:

MDV2_ MDV1_ SER

The meanings of those defaults are:
MDV2_ (default directory for data files)

MDV1_ default directory for executable programs)

SER (default destination)

INSTALL CUMANA Next we decide to install DISK drives, so we need an interface. The first one I came across was Cumana. This fits into the expansion port at the left of the QL, and we do that now, still leaving TK2 in the ROM port, and

switch on again (I TOLD YOU TO SWITCH OFF FOR CHANGES!)

DATAD\$ If at this point we typed **PROGD\$ PRINT DATAD\$**, we would **DESTD\$** be told **MDV1_**. If we tried **PRINT PROGD\$** or **PRINT DESTD\$**, we would be told **mdv2_** or **ser**. This means three commands to learn the three defaults. Luckily there is an easier command to use which tells all at once. No, we do NOT have to type **PRINT**; just **DLIST** on its own.

Just in case you don't know, **DATAD** is the device where the QL looks for the **DATA** it requires for operation. **PROGD** is the device where the QL looks for the **PROGRAM** to be used. **DESTD** is the device where the output, or result of our work, is sent. It could be and is, in most cases, the **SER** port, but not necessarily so.

We are able to change any one of the above to suit our requirements. And we will see how to do that further on. What we are doing just now is just looking to see where what is and how to find it.

In this discourse, when I mention **DEVICE**, I also mean the broader version as I have just explained. You may designate a window or a channel or almost anything you wish. Really, there is almost no limit as to where you send your material. But you **MUST** try everything to find out all the ins and outs of the system. You will be surprised to see how versatile it really is.

DLIST Type **DLIST** and find that we are still defaulting to:

MDV2_ MDV1_ SER

FLP_EXT Type in the Cumana command **FLP_EXT**. This activates the 30 or so extra commands in Cumana, if we then type in **DLIST**, we now find defaults of:

FLP1_ FLP1_ SER

So it is not TK2 which has changed the defaults but Cumana, after all it IS a disk interface!

Have you noticed something there?

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Cumana on installation defaults to MDV, but after the extra commands have been activated by FLP_EXT the defaults are changed to FLP. Thus is answered the question someone asked me.

As a matter of interest, if we were to remove TK2 and leave Cumana by itself, we would find that Cumana had about 34 extra commands, and that in conjunction with TK2 the total commands available would be in the order of 124. So Cumana only adds a couple of commands to TK2. Conversely, Cumana is basically composed of TK2 commands.

REMOVE CUMANA & INSTALL TRUMP CARD On power-up we find that FLP1_ starts to spin, because that is where Trump Card naturally defaults, but if we ask for DLIST we will find the command ignored, because with Trump Card the TK2 extra commands are not available until activated. So type in TK2_EXT, (different from the Cumana FLP_EXT) but has a similar result as it will bring in all the extra commands in Trump Card and TK2. Now there are in the region of 140 'extras' Commands available. Try DLIST now and we are again given:
FLP1_ FLP1_ SER

The important thing about all this is that TK2 defaults to FLP1_ at all times unless otherwise designated. Say we want the directory of flp1, we would normally type DIR FLP1_<ENTER> but now all we require is: DIR <ENTER>. There are many other TK2 shortcuts available.

CHANGE DEFAULTS To change defaults we could use the commands:
DATA_USE device (where device is new default device required)
PROG_USE device (w-d-i-n-d-d-r)
DEST_USE device (w-d-i-n-d-d-r)

Any NEW defaults would remain until changed to another default, a reset or power was turned off.

DLIST in this case would show the new defaults.

While we are on this thing about

defaults: We know that TK2 defaults to FLP1_ and that the DESTINATION default is ser, so turn your printer is on and let's see what happens if we type in WCOPY <ENTER>. No more, just that. Answer "Y" to the first question (selection) and your flp1_ will run as also will your printer, and you will have a print out of the LISTING of your selection. Try it. I will have more to say on WCOPY later.

(Note: Be careful about the kind of program you choose. Best it be SuperBASIC or an ASCII file. Otherwise, some of the embedded codes or machine code sent in raw fashion to the printer can cause it to have the screaming neemies! Ed)

WSTAT These two commands are STAT very similar. The first, WSTAT, provides statistics about all the files on a specified device, including date entered on or copied to copied to that device. Note that in this case the information is sent to the screen! If you wish output to the printer, use "WSTAT \SER"

STAT gives the status of the disk ONLY, in number of sectors. Please remember to specify device if not FLP1_. With STAT you have the status of the device without waiting for a lot of files to flash past, and pounding away at CTRL+F5 when the scroll wants to keep going. (The 'W' means wild card selection.)

DIR Once TK2 has been activated, all commands are directed to FLP1_, so there is no need to type in FLP1_. When a directory (of flp1_) is wanted, just type DIR <ENTER> to get the directory of flp1_.

Of course if it is any other device you are addressing, then you must designate the device.

When I write letters and save them to disk, I use the two initials of the person I am writing to, so that my letters to George Bernard would all look something like this GB052191 which means George Bernard May 21st 1991. All those letter titles would be jumbled up on the disk, and to sort them out is so easy

with TK2: just type DIR FLP2_GB, and a couple of seconds later all files on that disk starting with GB are on screen.

To take this one step further, DIR will isolate documents ending in _DOC, if that is your desire, or _DBF or _T87. You will note I use the full extension of underscore plus letters. This is to call emphasis to the correct manner of use in this case. Let's say you wanted to isolate the _DOC files. The command would be DIR FLP2_DOC. Please note that there are two underscores in that command. Look close and try this out for yourself.

The reason for this is that when QDOS adds the label to the title it also adds the underscore, so it is essential to add the underscore to the command.

DIR \SER Here is another dandy. If you wish to get a printout of the directory, try this: DIR \SER This sends the FLP1_ directory to SER.

If you play with this a while, you will find many strange things going on, and please don't ask me what as I am just playing with it myself!

EXTRAS \SER will output to the printer all the EXTRA commands available. Yes, I know it is in one long list, but at least you can see what you really have available.

WDEL is the same as DELETE except you are given the selection A/Y/N/Q meaning All Yes No Quit. This AYNQ is available for all the files on the disk. You may blanket All at once, or you may progress through the directory selectively.

The same applies to WCOPY and WREN.

VIEW This is very handy if you wish to have a quick look at a file without loading it. VIEW title or VIEW device title, will put on screen most files, including machine code files. When using this, you will find that the file is placed on the

screen in one continuous stream of words/characters. Long lines are truncated at the edge of the screen, so don't expect to see on the screen exactly how it would appear on paper. But everything is there on display nevertheless.

WREN The time may come when you wish to consolidate a number of disks into one to save space and still know which file came from where. In some cases you may wish to rename the original title of the files. This is a simple operation.

To rename a number of files with a prefix of ABC, the command would be: "WREN FLP2_FLP2_ABC_" Watch that last underscore. Also watch for that comma between the FLP2_ and FLP2; very important. (In this case the COMMA is interpreted as meaning 'TO'. If we type "wren flp2_ to flp2_ABC_", the effect would be exactly the same.) The file mentioned a while back, GB052191, would become ABC_GB052191.

If you wished to return to the original titles, the command would be: "WREN FLP2_ABC_FLP2_" (watch the comma after the second underscore) and the file ABC_GB052191 would now be back to GB052191. All other files with ABC would be changed accordingly.

If you wish to call the JACK file the JOHN file, this is also possible: "RENAME FLP1_JACK, FLP1_JOHN". Job done.

WCOPY The same applies to WCOPY, you can copy from one disk to another very quickly, adding the ABC_ as above at the same time, if you wish. (Don't forget the underscore!) It is also easy to copy SELECTED FILES to be transferred to another disk. To copy all files you could answer 'A' at the prompt; to copy selected files you would answer 'Y' or 'N' at the prompts.

To speed up the experiments, you could do this in RAM and see the results very quickly, saving wear and tear on disks and drives.

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ALTKEY Someone mentioned to me the other day that he never could get the ALTKEY to work for him. The problem was that he was not using the " " quotes when trying to set up the Altkey codes. Say you wanted to put DIR FLP2_ onto Altkey D. The way to do it is to type in: ALTKEY "D","DIR FLP2_"

Then every time you pressed the ALT + D you would get a directory of flp2_.

I should mention here that ALTKEY is case dependant, so that you could have "ALTKEY D" and also "ALTKEY d". To cancel this command you would type in ALTKEY. It also cancels all other ALTKEYs in use at that time, so be cautious. ALTKEY otherwise remains till a power off or reset is performed or it is redefined. It is easy to program a few of the most commonly used ALTKEYS into your BOOT program, thus making them available each time you load your program.

I started out to mention a few things and in the course of reading the manual to make sure I had everything as it should be (I think), I found out a lot about TK2 that I did not know before.

So while you folks out there are trying those few ideas for yourselves, I am off to other things. There is a lot more good stuff in the TK2 manual, but it is not the easiest thing to read. However, I would like to urge you to take another look at it, just for fun.

Sometimes I think we rely too much on someone else telling us How to..... Goodness knows there are enough How To.... books on the market. We should be finding out more for our own selves. This way we would learn the hard way, which is also the best way to remember not to step in a puddle, (you get your feet wet.) Your mother told you not to do it and the first thing you did was go out and try it. What happened? You got your feet wet! And Boy! wasn't that a wonderful feeling? Getting your

feet wet I mean, not in learning your mother was right. So go ahead, try some of that TK2 stuff... Get your feet wet! Have fun.

If you still need some help with TK2, you can try asking me, but don't expect too much as I am just starting to get my own feet wet.

If I am in error on any point, please drop me a line and tell me where I am wrong, I just love being corrected, (yeah?) this way I learn more.

